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ABSTRACT

Excerpted from the Annual Report to the Texas Association of Junior completed comparing the quality of part-time faculty with that of full-time teachers. The search found no comparative studies, but it did reveal that evaluations of part-time teachers are often subjective and provide inconclusive findings. Although some studies point to the higher percentages of full-time faculty with higher degrees and with more teaching experience, other studies stress the valuable expertise brought by part-time instructors from the business world. Other sources consider evaluation tools, support services, and accessibility of faculty to students. The search also sought to determine the ways in which part-time instructors are used most effectively. Studies revealed that part-time faculty are highly used in adult education and extension courses, that they provide specialized expertise, and that they are willing to teach at odd times and locations. This insures the college's ability to adjust to sudden shifts in enrollment and course needs. The final area of investigation of the search was related to the differences between the responsibilities of full- and part-time faculty. Findings indicated that many part-time staff are not given office space and are not paid to hold office hours or participate in orientation or department meetings. References to specific studies are included. (JP)

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PART-TIME FACULTY:

THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES & THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

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PART-TIME FACULTY: THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES & THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

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What comparative studies have been completed in which the quality of instruction of part-time faculty was compared to that of full-time instructors?

An Eric Search was run using part-time faculty as the primary descriptor; therefore, this paper is the result of analyzing all papers written on anything having to do with this broad category within the last ten years. Judging from the search and from comments made in several papers, there have been no comparative studies completed which sought to compare the quality of instruction of part-time faculty with the quality of instruction one might receive from a full-time faculty member.

Perhaps the generalization is too broad, for in one instance superior quality may be evident in one part-time faculty and low-grade quality found in the next. It is more than apparent that this same range exists when full-time faculty are being evaluated as to the quality of their instruction.

Furthermore, an adequate evaluative tool is yet to be found. Who is to judge quality? the students? the administrators? one's peers? or perhaps oneself? How is the elusive term to be defined and quantified? "The attempt to judge the relative quality of day and part-time faculty seems a futile exercise because of the inadequate evaluation techniques and criteria" (Lombardi I:32).

Also, according to Lombardi (I:47), that aside from the previously stated data, "the contention that part-time instructors are or are not as competent as full-time instructors is debatable, primarily because the criteria for competence vary and because few administrators or faculty members are willing to utilize sophisticated evaluation procedures".

In a statewide survey about part-time faculty in California Community Colleges, Sewell found that approximately 75% of the colleges report that their part-time faculty members are being evaluated, though not in an effort to compare them with full-time faculty. Sixty-seven percent of these state that this procedure is not as comprehensive as that used to evaluate their full-time counterparts, and it is more common that a negative evaluation may be used as a reason for not rehiring a part-time instructor than for not rehiring a full-time faculty member (Sewell: 11-12).

An evaluation plan was developed by David B. Fellows to aid Community/Junior colleges in evaluating their part-time faculty members. He stressed the use of self-evaluation and self-instruction (by means of a handbook compiled to foster their professional growth--one which particularly introduces concepts of teaching adults), and an adequate amount of coaching by administrators directly responsible for part-time faculty (Fellows: 92, 96, 97).

Several quantifiable facts recur in much of the literature. Percentage-wise, full-time faculty have completed higher degrees and have more teaching experience.

In the Spring of 1975, a nationwide study of faculty teaching humanities in all types of two-year colleges was conducted by the Center for the Study of Community Colleges. Findings showed that 12% of the part-timers held doctorates as compared to 15% of the full-timers.

This study also revealed that 2/3 of the part-time faculty studied had less than five years teaching experience, whereas only 37% of the full-time faculty fell into this category. Part-time faculty are chosen to a larger extent from non-educational sources (Lombardi I:30-31). It is unlikely that a college would be able to find someone with an advanced degree who is proficient in teaching floral design, body mechanics, hair styling, or plumbing.

These statistics regarding degrees and teaching experience are easily determined and manipulated; therefore, they are often used to argue that part-time faculty are not as well qualified--hence inferior.

Other arguments are equally well taken. Many part-time faculty work in the business world full-time. They teach, not for the money, but for the joy of teaching, and they bring with them a freshness and excitement which is not to be found among the ranks of the full-time faculty. These part-time instructors may include space scientists, university professors, managers in industry, private businessmen, and skilled craftsmen. The most important benefit to students is the opportunity to study under such outstanding persons (Guichard:4-5).

The study by Grymes, involving the part-time faculty at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College (Virginia), seemed to indicate that their part-time instructors are academically and experientially qualified to teach the classes for which they are responsible; "they possess the knowledges, skills, and credentials required by the College, the Virginia Community College System, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools" (Grymes:40).

Throughout the literature, concern has been voiced that part-time faculty tend to be inaccessible and unavailable to students. This objection seems to have merit; however, faculty involved have voiced their concern also, and would like to have office space for part-time faculty made available to them. In most cases these instructors spend many hours beyond those for which they are paid conducting group sessions, sponsoring field trips, and having individual conferences (Guichard:5).

Grymes states that any college which employs large numbers of part-time faculty members should make certain that these persons have the potential for being as valuable as a full-time faculty member who might also teach the same course.

Since normal employment procedures insure that instructors must be professionally qualified, a tool is needed to determine the effectiveness one might have in the classroom. Grymes points out that one way this may be accomplished is to ascertain the teacher's self concept.

A "positive view of self" is set forth by Arthur W. Combes as being one of the characteristics of an effective teacher. Also the relationship between these two variables was found to be positive and statistically significant in a

study conducted by Aspy and Buhler. The most practical tool to accomplish this would be a faculty survey (Grymes:3-4).

One must also be aware that "effective instruction often depends upon the adequacy of the support services which an institution provides for its faculty" (Grymes:7). Whether due to other commitments by the part-time faculty or a lack of effort on the part of the administration, there appears to be a neglect of integrating the part-time instructor into the total educational program. "The part-time person often is not present or even hired when courses are planned. Textbook adoptions, course outlines, and such are decided in the part-time person's absence. A phone call is made to hire the instructor just before the class actually meets"...(Hassencahl:6). It is obvious that in-depth preparation is not often possible, and is rarely rewarded monetarily.

In a study by Cooke, the majority of instructors indicated that the college had not supplied them with their respective course outlines. They also reported having less than complete support from such services as the media center, bookstore, library, and lacked adequate secretarial aid and rights to duplicating materials.

He found the major concern of the part-time faculty to be the lack of administrative support. Cooke urges colleges to make more instructional support services available to part-time faculty, and urges administrators to assess the situation and problems of these instructors more carefully (Cooke:16-18). This may be one key to insuring better quality instruction from those who serve the college in a part-time capacity.

> In discussions of the growing practice of hiring large numbers of part-time instructors, questions concerning their qualifications invariably arise and comparisons are made with the qualifications of full-time instructors. As with many evaluative judgments of educational practices there is little objective evidence to support the differing judgments. Most are subjective, often rationalizations to support one's opinion or practice. It is as unlikely for administrators to state that part-time instructors are not as well qualified as full-time instructors as it is for tenured faculty and their representatives to state the opposite. The truth of the matter is that "there is no statistical evidence that full-time faculty are better than part-time people" (Harper, 1975:8) or vice versa (Lombardi II:25).

<u>How and when are part-time instructors most effectively used</u>?

Though often neglected, part-time instructors fill a much needed place in our community colleges. They enable the college to offer and adequately staff a multitude of short-term courses and programs that meet specific needs of the community.

In a study conducted by Cooke, which encompassed the community colleges of North Carolina, it was found that part-time faculty were used in all divisions

of the colleges, with more than 1/2 being assigned to the adult education and extension divisions. These divisions tend to place more emphasis upon proficiency than on degrees held (Cooke:15, 16).

Vaughan states that perhaps this fact has caused a weakening of ties between the college and the community. In other words, part-time students tend to be taught exclusively by part-time faculty, while the full-time instructor spends the majority of his time with full-time students. Because of the former, these students feel even more distant from the "center of things", and the latter rarely receive the added bonus of being taught by a banker, attorney, or CPA. Vaughan suggests that reversing this procedure at least 20% of the time would benefit all involved. He states that "the college cannot become truly community-based until it brings the resources of the community into the mainstream of what is happening at the college" (Vaughan:51-52).

The resource mentioned above is primarily the specialized expertise of persons working outside the teaching profession--ones who use their skill daily in the competition of the business world. "This specialized expertise and generous willingness to provide students with a variety of valuable educational experiences make the part-time instructor a valuable asset in providing the best education possible for those who attend Community Colleges" (Guichard:5).

The part-time instructor makes it possible for the college to provide additional sections of a particular class for an indefinite period of time. These instructors also provide the expertise needed to teach special programs of short duration that are of interest to those in the community. All this is usually done with competence and a willingness to be of service to the community. Thus the college is capable of being receptive and responsive to the needs of the community while still staying with strict budgetary limits.

In a report on the statewide survey conducted about part-time faculty in California Community Colleges, Sewell sets forth a breakdown of percentages which indicated the load taught by part-time faculty in fields where their concentration is the greatest. The results are as follows: 49.9% in business and management; 58.2% in public affairs and services; 46.8% in home economics; 64.8% in apprenticeship; 44.9% in computer and information science; and 53.9% in law. These accounted for 6 of the 25 instructional areas surveyed (Sewell:6).

Administrators of community colleges contend that it is easier to find two highly trained and qualified instructors for two different subject areas than it is to find a full-time instructor whose talents and training are diverse enough to handle a variety of teaching assignments which might arise. They also contend that the use of part-time faculty makes it easier to adjust to varying needs in terms of sudden shifts in enrollment and course mix (Price:14).

Flexibility is one of the major assets found in hiring part-time faculty. They often are willing to teach at times and locations that full-time faculty find inconvenient or undesirable. This flexibility extends to scheduling where these faculty members make it possible to handle last minute course deletions and additions. Their lower rate of pay also provides flexibility within the budget, which allows the offering of a wide selection of courses (Grymes:2).

Should there be differences between the responsibilities of full-time and part-time faculty?

Whether there should be a difference between responsibilities for full-time and part-time faculty is a question debated in the literature. At the present time, that difference is used to justify the extremely low wages paid to the part-time faculty member.

It is acknowledged that classroom duties represent only 1/3 to 1/2 of the responsibilities assigned to the full-time faculty member. Other duties include advising students, serving on curriculum, departmental, and college governance committees, performing community services, and keeping regular office hours (Lombardi II:78).

The inconsistency appears to be that the majority of part-time faculty spend many extra hours in preparation and in counseling students--some would welcome the chance to become more fully involved in the life of the college, but rarely is office space made available or are they asked to serve on decision-making committees.

In a survey conducted by Hassencahn dealing with part-time faculty in the speech communication field, she found that 17% of the men and 70% of the women lacked office space; all but 10% of the men had mail boxes, but only 20% had their own telephone--92% of the women had mail boxes, but 69% lacked telephones; 20% of the men and 45% of the women were not even listed in the faculty phone directory (Hassenchan:5).

Marsh reports that in their study, it was found that 79% of the part-time faculty indicated that "they would hold office hours, even without compensation, if space were available to them" (Marsh:24).

At the conclusion of a study by Ferris of the part-time faculty situation in the Los Rios District of California, he makes four recommendations, two of which apply to this issue. He suggests an integration of the day and evening colleges, stating that this integration would enable those serving in part-time capacities to plan for "student progress as to curriculum, teaching methods, textbooks, etc., and give them an opportunity and a place to meet with their students, and give them greater access to classroom materials, office supplies, equipment, and clerical assistance." Ferris also suggests that those part-time instructors who perform the extra duties (committee work, curriculum development, counseling...) of a full-time faculty member should merit the same fringe benefits (Ferris:11-12).

In the statewide (California) study conducted by Sewell, the colleges were asked to list duties required of part-time faculty other than preparation and instruction. Sixty-two percent stated that no additional duties were required, whereas 38% required office hours, orientation meetings, and department meetings. Sixty-seven percent of the colleges requiring additional duties indicated that the part-time instructor was not being paid for this added workload (Sewell:11).

In another survey which sought to determine faculty status in the Junior Colleges of Texas, Thomason reports that in regard to out-of-class activities required of part-time faculty, 48% of the colleges require participation in department meetings, 36% require their attendance at general faculty meetings, 27% require their participation on committees (Thomason:5).

When an instructor is paid only for his/her physical presence in the classroom, it defines an instructor in the worse way possible. It negates professional growth, class preparation, student advisement and evaluation, and classifies them as worthless. "The hourly system recognizes only the tip of the iceberg in education, and in doing so, it constantly erodes the base" (March:36).

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